
SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY

The Sāṃkhya Philosophy is one among the oldest school in India Philosophy. This is so because the basic tenets of Sāṃkhya can be seen in Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Yoga, Jainism, and Vedānta.

- ❖ The founder of Sāṃkhya Philosophy is '[Kapila](#)' who has written the script 'Sāṃkhya Sūtra'. 'Sāṃkhya Kārika' by Isvarakṛṣṇa mentioned Sāṃkhya Philosophy

The word Sāṃkhya is derived from the word 'Saṃkhyā'

Number: Right knowledge is about understanding the reality by specifying the number of ultimate constituents of the universe.

Right Knowledge: means 'perfect knowledge' and that is about the reality.

METAPHYSICS: SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY

Dualistic Realism

Prakṛti

Purusas

Sāṃkhya Philosophy maintains the plurality of Purusas (self) and the existence of matter, hence, treated as pluralistic. It is realism because they viewed that both matter and spirit are equally real.

The Sāṃkhya school expresses that the self (Purusa) and the non-self (Prakriti) are radically different from each other, as like, subject and object.

As subject can never be the object, similarly, an object can never be the subject.

Core Questions

- ❖ What is the ultimate cause of an object?
- ❖ What are the constituents of the universe?
- ❖ What is the ultimate stuff of which the various objects of the world are made?

According to Sāṃkhya Philosophy

Prakriti is the ultimate (first) cause of all objects, including our mind, body and sense organs. It is observed that every effect must have a cause. Cause and effect are two inseparable components stand for all sorts of creation in the cosmos. Hence, all objects of the world are bounded in the chain of cause-effect relation. This relation Sāṃkhya named as '[satkāryavāda](#)' and populated as '[theory of causation](#)'.

THEORY OF CAUSATION

The Sāṃkhya theory of causation is known as satkāryavāda. It explains the effect exists in its material cause prior to its production.

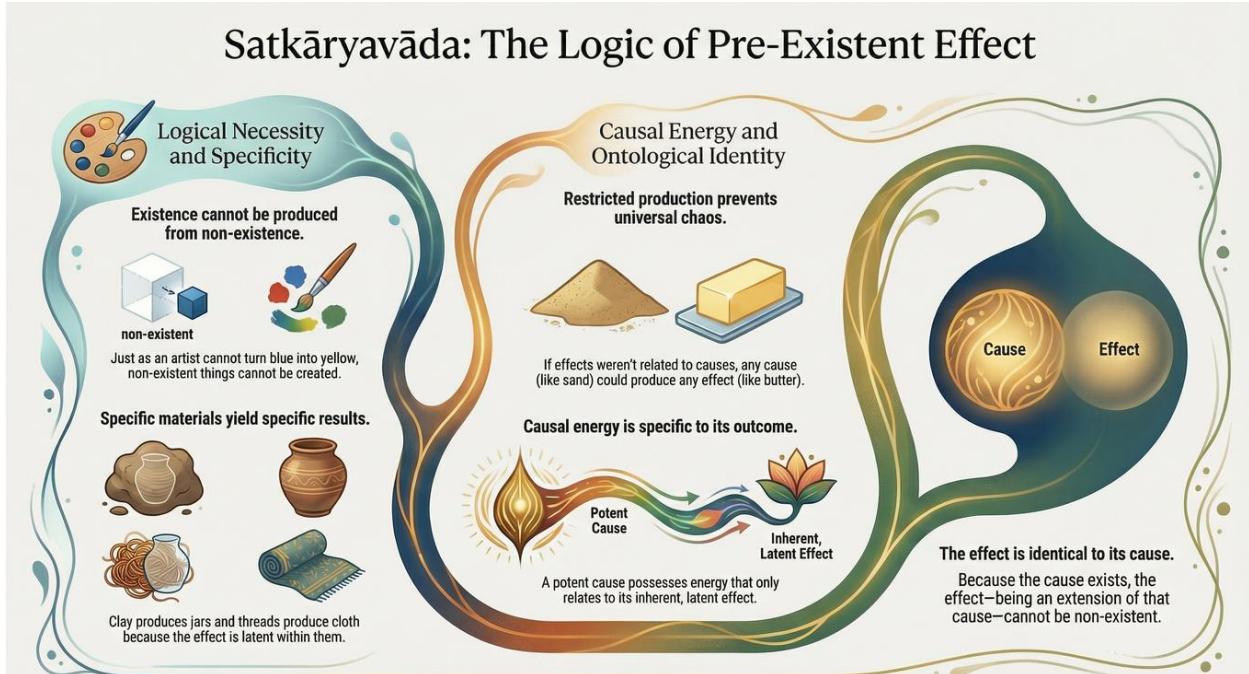
- ❖ For example, curd was existing in the milk before comes into existence. Hence, the effect is not a real beginning or a new creation. It is also named as '[parināmavāda](#)'.
- ❖ By refuting this view Nyāyikas said that effect is a new creation, otherwise why we say this is the effect and that was the cause which is aka [asatkāryavāda/ ārambhavāda](#).

Sāṃkhya Arguments to support satkāryavāda

- ✚ If the effect does not exist in the cause prior to its operation, none can bring into existence out of the cause. For example, blue cannot be turned into yellow even by a thousand artists. The effect is related to its cause. Effect is nothing but the manifestation of the cause, as oil will be produced from oil seeds only. Thus, effect pre-exists in the material cause in a latent or un-manifest condition.
- ✚ A particular effect can be produced out of a particular material cause. A mud jar can be produced out of clay only; cloth can be produced out of threads only. Thus, it proves that the effects are existing in the cause in a latent condition.
- ✚ If the effect is not related to its cause, then every effect would arise from every cause. But this does not happen. Every effect does not arise from every cause. For example, butter cannot be produced from sands, waters, or oils. It is produced from milk only.
- ✚ The effect pre-exists in the cause since it can be produced by a potent cause only. A potent cause has causal energy to produce a particular effect. The causal energy in this case is inferred from the perception of the effect. If the effect is not existent in the cause, then the causal energy can't be

related to it. If the causal energy is unrelated to the effect, then any effect will arise from any cause. Hence, the effect must be pre-existent in its potent cause only.

- The effect pre-exists in the cause since it is identical in nature with its cause. The effect is not different from the cause. The cause is existent and therefore, the effect cannot be non-existent. Hence, effect inheres in its cause. This is so because there is no identity between entity and non-entity.



The Sāṃkhya disagrees with Nyāyikas and said that if curd as an effect is a new creation and does not exist in its material cause (milk) prior to its production, then can we produce curd from some other liquids like oil, kerosene, diesel etc. Hence, each effect exists in its material cause prior to its production in a hidden form.

Q. If every effect must have a cause, then what would be the cause of a material cause?

Sāṃkhya philosophy expressed that Prakṛti is the first and ultimate cause of all objects of the world both gross and subtle.

PRAKRTI

- ❖ Prakṛti is the ultimate cause of the universe.
- ❖ It is regarded as the first cause.
- ❖ All effects of the universe are based upon it.
- ❖ Being the first element of the universe, Prakṛti itself is uncaused, eternal, and all pervading. Hence, it is called “**pradhāna**”.
- ❖ It can't be perceived but can be inferred from its effect.
- ❖ Thus, it is known as '**anumā**'.

- In the form of conscious elements, it is called jada, and in the form of the unmanifested objects, it is called 'avayakta'.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRAKRTI AND OBJECTS

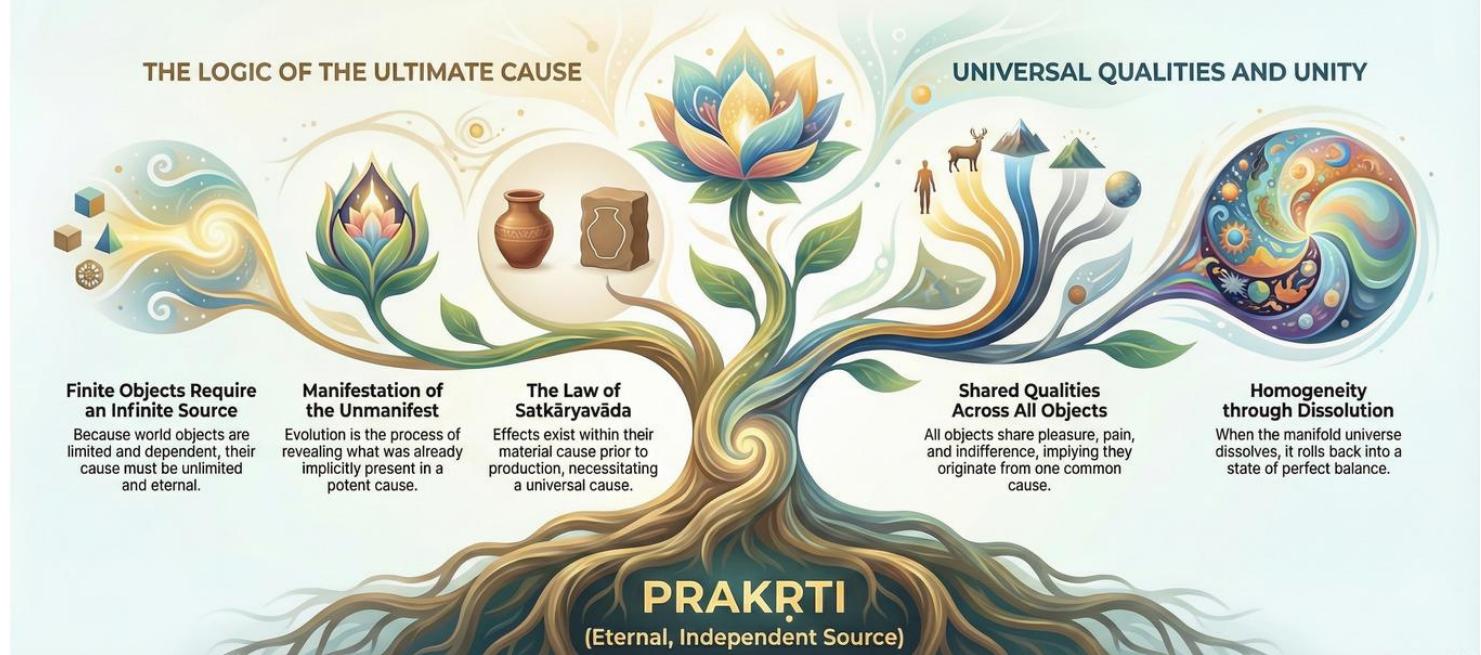
Prakrti	Object
Objects are the effects of Prakrti	Prakrti has neither beginning nor end
These are dependent, relative, many and non-eternal because they are created & destroyed	It is unborn, independent, absolute, one, eternal and beyond creation and destruction
Limited within the space-time continuum	Prakrti is beyond of space-time continuum
Manifest and composite	Unmanifest and without parts.

Thus, Vyāsa says that Prakrti is both 'is' and 'is-not'.

PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF PRAKRTI

The Five Proofs of Prakrti: Why a Root Cause Must Exist

According to Sāṃkhya philosophy, the manifest world cannot be its own cause. These five proofs establish Prakrti as the underlying, unmanifest reality—the eternal, independent source from which all finite objects evolve and to which they eventually return.



GUNAS OF PRAKRTI

The Sāṃkhya Philosophy advocates three gunas of Prakṛti. These are; Sattva, rajas and tamas. Prakṛti is a state of equilibrium of these three gunas.

- ❖ Sattva: Sattva is that element of Prakṛti which is of the nature of pleasure, light (laghu) and bright or illuminating (prakāsaka). The tendency towards conscious manifestation in the senses, the mind and the intellect; the luminosity of light and the power of reflection in a mirror or crystal are all due to the operation of the element of Sattva in the constitution of things.

For example, blazing up a fire, upward curse of vapour etc. Sattva is believed to be white.

- ❖ ii) Rajas: Rajas is the principle of activity in things. Its colour is red. It is active because of its mobility and stimulation. It is also the nature of pain.

For example, on account of rajas, fire spread; wind blows; the mind becomes restless, etc.

- ❖ Tamas: Tamas is the principle of passivity and negativity in things. Its colour is black. It is opposed to the Sattva guna because it is heavy, laziness, drowsiness. It produces ignorance and darkness and leads to confusion and bewilderment.



Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas contradict as well as cooperate among each other to produce an object. There are two types of transformations occur in the gunas. These are, 'svarupa' and 'virupa'.

Svarupa

During pralaya or dissolution of the world, the gunas are changing within themselves without disturbing the others. That is, Sattva changes into Sattva, rajas changes into rajas and tama changes into tama. Such

transformation of the gunas is called ‘**svarupaparināma**’ or change into the homogenous. In this stage, the gunas can neither create nor produce anything.

Virupa

In case of pralaya or dissolution of the world the gunas are in a state of constant flux and each tries to dominate the others. It is this flux of gunas that results in the formation of various objects. This kind of transformation is called virupa transformation or change into the heterogeneous. So, it is the starting point of the world’s evolution.

PURUSA

According to the Sāmkhya Philosophy, Purusa or self is an eternal reality.

- ❖ Purusa is the self, subject and knower.
- ❖ It never be an object because, the existence of objects can be proved in some ways whereas, non-existence can’t be proved in anyways.
- ❖ Purusa is neither the body, nor the mind (mānas), neither ego (ahamkāra) nor intellect (buddhi).
- ❖ It is not the substance which has the quality of consciousness.
- ❖ It is itself pure-consciousness
- ❖ It is the basis of all knowledge and is the supreme knower.
- ❖ It can’t be the object of knowledge
- ❖ It is the observer, eternally free, the impartial spectator and peaceful
- ❖ It is beyond the space-time continuum, change, and activity. It is the self-enlightened, self-proved and hence, causasui
- ❖ It is all pervading, formless, and eternal.
- ❖ Its existence can’t be doubted because in its absence, all knowledge even doubt is not possible.
- ❖ It has been described as, devoid of three gunas, negative, inactive, solitary witness, observer, knower and of the nature of illumination.
- ❖ According to Sāmkhya Philosophy, the purusa is of the nature of pure consciousness and hence beyond the limits of Prakṛti.
- ❖ It is free from distortions.
- ❖ It’s objects changes but it itself never changes.
- ❖ It is above self-arrogance, aversion and attachment.

5 SĀMKHYA ARGUMENTS: FOR ESTABLISHING THE EXISTENCE OF PURUSA

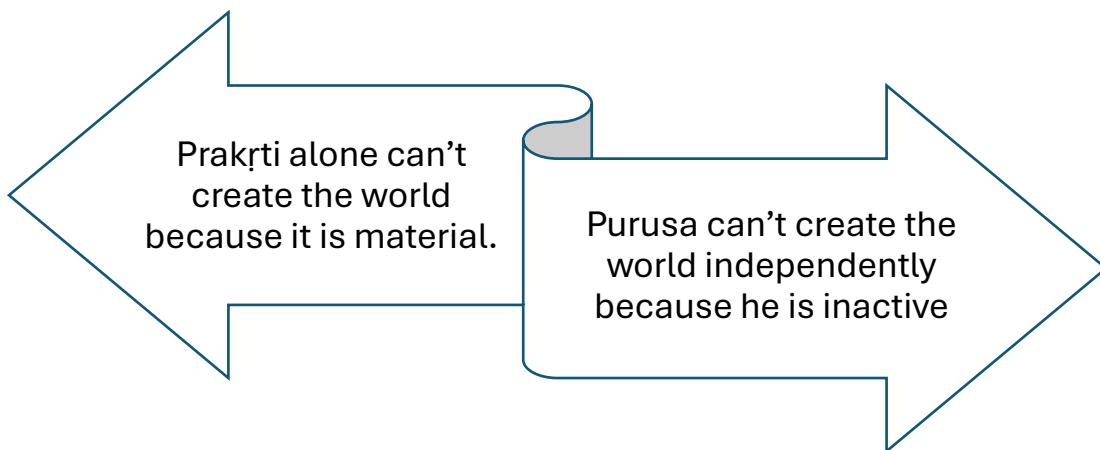
- ❖ All the worldly objects are meant for some one. This is so because the conscious Prakṛti can’t make use of them. Hence, all these substances are for Purusa or self.
- ❖ Prakṛti evolves itself in order to serve the Purusa’s end.
- ❖ The three gunas, Prakṛti, and the subtle body, all are served to the Purusa.
- ❖ Substances of the universe are composed of three gunas. The purusa is the witness of three gunas and he is beyond from these gunas.

- ❖ Purusa is a **pure consciousness** which is beyond our experience and analysis.
- ❖ It is the substratum of all knowledge both positive and negative. There can be no experience without him. This is so because he is the sole authority of all experiential knowledge.
- ❖ Prakṛti is **unconscious**, it can't enjoy her creation. Hence, a conscious element is needed to make use of them.
- ❖ Prakṛti is the one to be enjoyed (**bhogyā**) and so there must be an enjoyer (**bhoktā**). This argument supports the existence of Purusa.

There are persons who try to get relieved from all sorts of sufferings of the world. The desire for liberation and emancipation implies the existence of a person who can try for and obtain liberation. Hence, it is enforced to accept the existence of Purusa.

On the account of Sāṃkhya, there are pluralities of self or purusa. All these Purusas are identical in their essences and they are embedded with consciousness. Hence, consciousness is found in all the selves. This view is similar to Jainism, and Mimansa because they believe in the plurality of selves.

EVOLUTION



Hence, the contact between Prakṛti and Purusa is necessary for the evolution to start though they are possessing different and opposite natures.

Example

The Prakṛti is like a blind man and the Purusa is like a lame man cooperate each other to reach their destination. The lame man sits on the shoulders of the blind mind and pointing to him the way where to go and in which direction to move.

In much the same manner, the inactive- eternal Purusa and the conscious Prakṛti cooperate with each other in order to start the evolution.

Regarding their contact, the Sāṃkhya says, there is no real contact took place between Prakṛti and Purusa. But their **mere closeness or nearness with each other disturbs the stability of the gunas of Prakṛti**. When

these three gunas; sattva, rajas, tamas disturb and disrupt, they are constantly mixing and dissociating. As a consequence, evolution begins.

The order of creation is as follows.

i) Mahat

Mahat is the first product of evolution. It is cosmic in its nature. Besides this fact, it has psychological aspect in which it is called intellect or buddhi.

Buddhi should not be understood as the same as consciousness. The reason is buddhi is material whereas consciousness is eternal.

An important function of buddhi is to take decision which is a part of memory act. This helps to distinguish between the known and the knower.

Sattva is predominately found as an attribute of buddhi. Buddhi helps to identify the soul or the ātman which differs from all physical objects and their qualities.

ii) Ahamkāra

Ahamkāra is understood as ‘ego’ in English. It is the [second product of evolution](#). Ego is identified as “I” or “mine” feelings of an individual.

Every individual has buddhi, and since ahamkāra is a practical element of buddhi, it is found in all individuals. Because of ego the purusa looks upon himself as an active agent, desire and strive for ends, and possesses characteristics.

An individual perceives an object through sense organs. Then mind reflects on these perceptions and determines their nature. Following this, the attitude of ‘mine’ and ‘for me’ is attributed to these objects. This is nothing but regarded as ‘ego’. In this product (ahamkāra), all these three gunas of prakṛti operates.

iii) Mānas

According to the Sāṃkhya Philosophy, **mānas or mind is neither eternal nor atomic**. It is constituted with parts and thus can come into contact with the different sense organs simultaneously.

Mind helps to analyze and synthesize the sense-data into determinate perceptions. Being an internal sense organ, it is aware of objects belonging to the past, present, and the future.

iv) Jñānendriyas

Jñānendriyas are known as five sense organs; **nose, ears, eyes, skin, and tongue**. On Sāṃkhya views, sense is an imperceptible energy or force which exists in the perceived organs and apprehends the object. This implies, the sense is not the ears but their power of hearing. Thus, the senses are not perceptible but can infer. They are informed from the functions that they perform. The five sense organs produce knowledge of touch, colour, smell, heard, and taste. All these are born because of the Purusa and they are the result of ego or ahamkāra.

v) Karmendriyas

Karmendriyas is understood as the five organs of action which reside in mouth, ears, feet, anus, and the sex organ. They perform the functions respectively as speech, hearing, movement, excretion, and reproduction. The cause of the creation of these organs is the desire of Purusa for his experience.

vi) Tanmātrās

There are five tanmātrās; sabda or sound, sparsa or touch, rupa or form, rasa or taste, and Gandha or smell. All are very subtle because they are the elements of the objects. Hence, they can't be perceived but inferred. The Sāmkhya School viewed that the five elements; earth, water, air, fire, and ether have their origin in the five tanmātrās.

vii) Mahābhutas

There are five mahābhutas found in the cosmos namely;

Air or Vāyu	Fire or Agni	Akāsa or Ether	Water or Jala	Prathivi or Earth
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Their respective qualities are; touch, colour, sound, taste, and smell.

PISTEMOLOGY

The Sāmkhya philosophy recognizes three independent sources of valid knowledge (Pramāna).

Perception	Inference	Verbal testimony (sabda)
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According to the Sāmkhya, self-possess knowledge. To have knowledge of an object there should be contact between object and sense organs. Again, the connection must be found between mind and sense organs.

Lastly, mind is related to mahat for cognition. Thus the mahat becomes transformed into the form of particular objects. Mahat being unconscious and physical entity can't generate knowledge alone. Hence, it requires a conscious and eternal entity like Purusa. Since Purusa is pure consciousness helps Prakrti to generate knowledge.

The Sāmkhya Philosophy accepts two sorts of perception, **savikalpaka** and **nirvikalpaka** as Nyaya advocates.

Sāmkhya holds that vyāpti is found in all sorts of inference. Inference are of two sorts

-  Affirmative (vita)
-  Negative (avita).

In case of the former, inferences are constituted of universal affirmative propositions. But in case of the later, it consists of universal negative propositions.

The Sāṃkhya accepts the five-membered syllogism of the Nyaya as the most adequate pattern of inference. The Sāṃkhya School adores sabda as an independent source of valid knowledge.

Sabda or verbal testimony is of two kinds, ‘laukika’ and ‘vaidika’.

BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

The self, who is eternal, pure conscious, and all pervading, due to its ignorance identifies itself with the mānas, ahṛikara, and mahat which are the products of Prakrti. Thus, it experiences the worldly pain and suffering.

The universe is constituted of manifold objects, and since objects are embedded with gunas and selves and even interrelated among them, suffering is unavoidable. This is so because the Sāṃkhya claims that **wherever there is guna there is suffering**.

Further, they said that the life in heaven is also controlled by the gunas.

Since there are sufferings and bondage, there are also paths leads to liberation, emancipation or salvation. On Sāṃkhya account, there are two sorts of liberation.

- i) Jivanmukti
- ii) Videhamukti

The self attains freedom from worldly suffering and realizes truth in one's life living in the earth is known as jivanmukti.

In case of videhamukti, the self attains complete liberation from all sorts of sufferings. This is achieved after death only. Thus, **videhamukti is known as kaivalya**.

This is understood as liberation from the gross body. The Sāṃkhya theory of liberation is termed as ‘apavarga’, the purusartha or the summum bonum of life

